

The
Melville Society
N E W S L E T T E R

WINTER, 1958

Volume XIV

Number 4

Members have waited an unconscionably long while for this issue, ordinarily due in December or January. It appears when spring has already firmly established itself in most parts of the country; though in Colorado, where this is printed, snow covered the landscape during much of the early part of April. "Springtime in the Rockies" has arrived late, as does this issue.

The fault lies chiefly, of course, with difficulties of adjustment which the Society is experiencing during its "between-secretaries" period. Members may be assured that the condition is a temporary one. The Society is far from being moribund: its membership continues to grow; its finances are sound; and its activities go on unabated. For the first half of 1959, Tyrus Hillway remains as acting secretary and editor *pro tempore* of the *Newsletter*. The executive committee expresses hope that it will have a new permanent secretary on the job not later than June. Members may expect official word on this matter very shortly.

Most important of the various projects which are scheduled for completion during 1959 is the long-awaited six-year Melville bibliography which has been prepared by our bibliographical committee. Stuart C. Sherman, the chairman, feels entirely confident that copies will be ready for distribution to active members with our next

issue. The work has been arduous and extremely time-consuming; the committee believes that our members would rather have a bibliography which is accurate and comprehensive than one rushed through to meet a deadline.

A second useful item that may be available during the current year is the Davis-Gilman collected edition of Melville's letters, which is to be published by the Yale University Press. Meanwhile, plans for publication of the Hayford-Roper checklist bibliography of Melville have not yet been announced officially. The projected full-dress biography of Melville by Hillway must be assigned to the still uncertain future; it is, however, definitely launched.

For the next three months members may send their dues to the acting secretary at Box 8, Colorado State College, in Greeley, Colorado. The name and address of the new secretary will no doubt be carried in our next number. Members are hereby reminded that annual dues for 1959 remain the same as last year, two dollars for active members and one dollar for associate members. The Society ended the year 1958 with all bills paid and a cash balance of \$93.67 in the bank. The balance, as will be noted, is larger than the previous year's balance and may, if all goes well, eventually grow to a size large enough to finance a major project of the Society.

NEW YORK MEETING

The annual meeting of the Society was held as planned in the Hartford Room of the Hotel Statler, New York City, at 11:30 o'clock on the morning of December 28. An excellent program presented by panelists Harrison Hayford, Norman Holmes Pearson, and Rear Admiral John D. Hayes (USN-ret.) on the subject of *Billy Budd* was followed by questions and comments from the floor. President Wilson

L. Heflin presided. The interest of those attending carried the meeting considerably overtime.

Richard Fogle of Tulane University was elected a member of the executive committee to serve through 1963. Stuart C. Sherman, librarian of the Providence (R. I.) Public Library, was elected secretary. He was not, however, present at the meeting; and it was later learned that

his duties as full-time librarian and part-time library consultant would make it virtually impossible for him to serve. The regrettable discovery (not made until after the meeting) again left the Society without a permanent secretary. Sherman agreed to continue in the position of bibliographer for the Society.

Officers of the Society for 1959 will be as follows: President, Laurence Barrett of Kalamazoo College; acting secretary, Tyrus Hillway of Colorado State College (to serve only until a successor has been secured). Present members of the executive committee (with final year of term

indicated) are Howard C. Horsford (1959), Barrett (1960), Wilson L. Heflin (1961), Hillway (1962), and Richard H. Fogle (1963).

President Barrett has designated Monday, December 28, as the date of the 1959 annual meeting. It will be held in Chicago in connection with the convention of the Modern Language Association. The hour tentatively set is 4:30 in the afternoon. Correspondence regarding our meeting and any suggestions for this year's program should be sent directly to President Barrett.

NOTES

Harry Levin's *The Power of Blackness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958) contains a section (Chapters VI and VII, principally) on Melville. \$4.00.

The Viking Press will publish a paperback edition of its *Portable Melville*, edited by Jay Leyda, in April.

"A Re-Reading of *Moby Dick*," by Granville Hicks, appears in *Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels*, edited by Charles Shapiro (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1958). \$5.00.

Professor Paul Lauter of Dartmouth College is engaged in a study of "Rhetoric in American Literature: Thoreau, Whitman, and Melville."

Dana Andrews and Jane Powell are co-stars in a Warner Brothers motion picture (in technicolor) called *Enchanted Island*. The plot follows *Typee* more closely than the previous movies based upon Melville's first novel, though Hollywood has added a few necessary embellishments. The hero, according to an attractive advertising brochure, is "captured by cannibals" and becomes a "slave to the blue-eyed (sic) princess of the dreaded Typee headhunters . . . and to her savage code of love and taboos." The seed of interest in the South Seas which Melville planted obviously continues to flower. No "Oscars" are anticipated.

William S. Akin reports that the library of the Union League Club of Chicago has recently received a bound copy of a master's thesis by Henry A. Robertson, Jr., entitled "White Jacket: A Study

of Herman Melville's Literary Technique in Nautical Fiction." The thesis was completed in February of last year for Loyola University.

Omoo, edited by Walter Blair and Harrison Hayford, is in page-proof and will be published by Hendricks House in the near future, probably during 1959. *Clarel*, edited by Walter E. Bezanson, should also be out this year.

A new edition of *Billy Budd*, edited by Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, may be in the offing. Also under consideration: a new *White-Jacket*.

The University of Oklahoma Press will publish Melville's *Shorter Tales* (not including *Billy Budd*), edited by Richard Fogle.

Dorset Graves is making a study of "Polarity in the Thought and Work of Melville" at the University of (Nebraska?).

M. Douglas Sackman comments that he has been so exceptionally busy this season as to find himself unable to read *Moby Dick* for a period of eight months.

The acting secretary, as a preliminary to his work on the new biography of Melville, would appreciate receiving off-prints of articles (recent or old) published by any member or friend of Melville scholarship. To the limit of his ability, he will be happy to reciprocate with copies of his own articles. Any clues to previously unmentioned Melville items which members may be willing to share will also be welcome.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER

IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Membership is two dollars per year and includes all services of the Society. Associate membership (non-voting) is one dollar per year and includes all issues of the Newsletter. Address Tyrus Hillway, acting secretary, at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.